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Declassified Case: NW 54739 Date: 10-24-2019

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Intelligence Information Cable

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Classified by [redacted] on [redacted] Exempt from General Declassification Schedule of E.O. 11652, Schedule 1, Category 1, (1) (2) Exempt from automatic downgrading and declassification.

FOIA(b) (3) - 50 USC 3024(i) (1) - Intelligence Sources and Methods

THIS IS AN INFORMATION REPORT, NOT FINALLY EVALUATED INTELLIGENCE

REPORT CLASS - SECRET - UNINTEL - [redacted]

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

CITE [redacted]

DIST 01 DEC 78

COUNTRY: ARGENTINA

Political Matters -

SUBJECT: BELIEF OF ~~OFFICERS OF ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES JOINT~~
 GENERAL STAFF THAT ARMY CORPS COMMANDERS WILL FORCE
 RESIGNATION OF ARGENTINE PRESIDENT IN DECEMBER 1978

SUMMARY: [redacted]

SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE ARGENTINE ARMED FORCES JOINT GENERAL
 STAFF REACHED THE CONCLUSION THAT A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE
 PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA AND ARMY CORPS COMMANDERS COULD TAKE
 PLACE DURING THE WEEK OF 4 DECEMBER AND MIGHT LEAD TO THE
 PRESIDENT'S FORCED RESIGNATION. THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR THIS
 CONFRONTATION WOULD BE DISSATISFACTION WITH THE POLICIES OF THE
 MINISTER OF ECONOMY. IN LARGE PART, THEY BASED THEIR CONCLUSION
 ON [redacted]

[redacted] CHANGES WOULD OCCUR IN THE GOVERNMENT

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DEC 15 1978

DURING THE WEEK OF 4 DECEMBER WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO THE

PRESIDENT'S OUSTER AND ON

REACTION TO THE PRESIDENT'S 23 NOVEMBER 1978 NATIONWIDE

ADDRESS WHICH SHOWED THAT ONLY EIGHT PERCENT OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

HAD A POSITIVE REACTION TO THE SPEECH. END SUMMARY.

1. OFFICERS OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF OF THE ARGENTINE
ARMED FORCES BELIEVE THAT ARGENTINE ARMY CORPS COMMANDERS
WILL SEEK A CONFRONTATION WITH PRESIDENT JORGE RAFAEL
VIDELA DURING THE WEEK OF 4 DECEMBER AND POSSIBLY FORCE
HIM TO RESIGN FROM OFFICE.

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THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF DR. JOSE
ALFREDO MARTINEZ DE HODZ, MINISTER OF ECONOMY
WOULD BE THE OSTENSIBLE REASON FOR THE CONFRONTATION.
MAJOR GENERAL CARLOS GUILLERMO SUAREZ MASON,
COMMANDER OF THE FIRST CORPS; MAJOR GENERAL LUCIANO
MENEDEZ, COMMANDER OF THE THIRD CORPS; MAJOR GENERAL
JOSE VAQUERO, COMMANDER OF THE FIFTH CORPS, AND
MAJOR GENERAL SANTIAGO OMAR RIVEROS, COMMANDER OF Military Institute

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THE MILITARY INSTITUTES, CONSIDER THESE POLICIES DISASTROUS.
JOINT GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT VIDELA WOULD
RESIGN RATHER THAN FIRE MARTINEZ DE HOZ. THEY ALSO BELIEVE
THAT IN THE EVENT OF VIDELA'S FORCED RESIGNATION, SUAREZ MASON
WOULD REPLACE HIM AS PRESIDENT AND MENENDEZ WOULD REPLACE
LT. GENERAL ROBERTO ~~V~~ I D L A, AS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
ARMY.

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3. SEVERAL FACTORS HAVE LED JOINT GENERAL STAFF OFFICERS
TO BELIEVE THAT THE ABOVE SCENARIO WILL TAKE PLACE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] DURING THE WEEK OF 4 DECEMBER SEVERAL CHANGES
WOULD OCCUR WHICH MIGHT COST VIDELA HIS JOB. IN ADDITION,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] VIDELA'S MEETING WITH BUENOS AIRES
NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ON FRIDAY, 24 NOVEMBER, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] VIDELA AND DISCUSSED ONLY TWO
TOPICS, INFLATION AND THE BEAGLE CHANNEL. ON THE FORMER SUBJECT,
VIDELA ASTONISHED THE PUBLISHERS BY SAYING THAT SINCE ARGENTINES
ARE ACCUSTOMED TO INFLATION, ITS EXISTENCE IS NOT REALLY A
PROBLEM. HE ALSO EXPRESSED CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE POLICIES
OF MARTINEZ DE HOZ. VIDELA COMPARED THE BEAGLE CHANNEL DISPUTE
TO A SOCCER MATCH IN WHICH CHILE BUILT UP AN EARLY LEAD AND
ARGENTINA IS NOW CATCHING UP AND LOOKING FOR A TIE. IF
ARGENTINA IS UNSUCCESSFUL IN TYING THE SCORE, IT WILL RESORT
TO MILITARY ACTION AND CHILE WOULD THEN LOSE.

4. ON 24 NOVEMBER 1978, SIDE CONDUCTED A SECRET POLL

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TO JUDGE PUBLIC REACTION TO VIDELA'S 23 NOVEMBER NATIONWIDE
ADDRESS. THIS WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF.
OF THOSE INTERVIEWED ONLY EIGHT PERCENT HAD A POSITIVE REACTION
TO THE SPEECH. APPROXIMATELY 75 PERCENT WERE NOT SATISFIED
AND 17 PERCENT EXPRESSED NO OPINION. [REDACTED]

5. THE CONCLUSIONS REGARDING A PROBABLE CONFRONTATION
BETWEEN THE CORPS COMMANDERS AND PRESIDENT VIDELA WERE REACHED
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] BY SENIOR OFFICERS OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF. THOSE
PRESENT WERE LEONE, TERRILLE, COLONEL HORACIO OSCAR ~~R O T T A~~,
COLONEL FRANCISCO OMAR ~~B A S A L D U A~~, COLONEL PARDO
~~ARGENTINO L I V A~~, A NAVY COMMANDER IN THE MARINE CORPS AND
TWO CIVILIAN ADVISORS TO BRIGADIER GENERAL RAMON ~~L A M P S~~,
J-2 OF THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ON THE
BASIS OF COMMENTS MADE DURING THE DISCUSSION IT IS APPARENT
THAT VIDELA HAS LOST THE SUPPORT OF BOTH THE ARMY AND THE
GENERAL PUBLIC AND THAT HIS REMOVAL IS LIKELY FOR INTERNAL
REASONS RATHER THAN FOR HIS POSITION ON THE BEAGLE CHANNEL
DISPUTE.)

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